

NAEB PUTS UP ITS DUKES

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Battle Lines Set at Meet in ChampaignHull Wins First Skirmish

Chicago, Oct. 16.-- If the country's educational broadcasters are to win their fight to service one third of the population which, surveys have indicated, is dissatisfied with commercial radio, they must win a major battle within the next year. This became apparent at the 22nd annual meeting of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (NAEB) in Champaign, Ill., this week. Battle lines were clearly drawn at the meeting with opposition from commercial broadcasters expected on one flank. On another is a fight within the NAEB., with one element, the progressive force now in power, favoring the establishment of a network, hiring of an executive secretary, doubling of dues and other aggressive action. Still another group is satisfied to remain status quo.

First skirmish was won by the progressive element when Dick Hull, head of radio for Iowa State College and its station WOI at Ames, was re-elected president, with the board of directors and membership okaying his expansion plans. Hull's attitude can be summarized by two statements he made at the meeting.

Discharge Obligation

"The next year is the one in which we are going to have to discharge our obligation to bring one-third of the American radio audience the public service programming it cannot find on the air today," he said. "We're going to have to get together if we're going to be more than a curiosity on the scene."

Type of opposition educational broadcasters can expect from outside their own ranks was indicated by reports that a former FCC commissioner was interested in trying to have 20 FM channels presently assigned to educators taken away and given to potential commercial telecasters.

Fights Move

Against this move and others of a similar type the NAEB expects to fight vigorously. Resolutions passed at the meeting called for the setting up of a Washington office to protect NAEB interests, the eventual hiring of a full-time executive secretary and arrangements for an intensive publicity and promotion campaign. Indicative, also, was the board's resolution stating that NAEB policy would be based on a decision to petition the FCC to reserve some television channels in the U-H-F band for eventual use by educational stations, even the educational institutions might not be in a position to use these channels for years. Behind latter point was the reasoning that such channels are comparable to natural resources and should be reserved for use by institutions publicly owned or backed.

FM Net

Establishment of an educational FM network received much consideration at the three-day meeting October 10-12. After opposition from some members it was decided

to go ahead with network planning and eventual operation. In outlining the feasibility of a network operation, Hull pointed out that NAEB now has 95 members and 50 stations in 31 states. He reviewed the fact that many of the stations cover large areas and that NAEB member stations, such as WNYC, New York, are talking of setting up regional public service networks. He further showed that if each of the stations could operate four hours a night and assign two hours of this as network option time, a top coverage job could be done by the net.

At the beginning, plan is to have a transcription net with stations exchanging programs thru a central office. Later, it is hoped, relays via wireless or cable would link stations and, it is planned, regional groupings. Already, it was said, the Canadian Broadcasting Company has offered to link with such a net.

More Dough Needed

To set up such an operation, more money than the NAEB members can get immediately from their parent institutions will be required, it was admitted. For this reason, negotiations are under way with a top-notch educational foundation which is being asked to put up \$50,000 to cover operations until the association can become self-supporting.

As first step toward formation of an educational net, Dallas Smythe, former FCC economist, now stationed at the University of Illinois, is going to survey educational broadcasters and institutions to get material which would be used for initial planning of the web.

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